

# Alianza para el Turismo Comunitario



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**Quarterly Report, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2012**

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## Table of Contents

I.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	3
II.	THIRD QUARTER FY2012 RESULTS SUMMARY TABLES.....	6
III.	INTRODUCTION.....	9
IV.	GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS.....	10
	COMPONENT A: TOURISM AND HANDICRAFTS VALUE CHAIN STRENGTHENING.....	10
	COMPONENT B: MARKET-BASED CONSERVATION STRATEGIES THROUGH TOURISM AND HANDICRAFTS SECTORS .....	31
V.	GENDER MAINSTREAMING ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS .....	33
VI.	ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE .....	34

## **I. Executive Summary**

### **Tourism and Handicraft Value Chain Strengthening**

Counterpart continued to provide training and technical support to enterprises and associations in the tourism and handicraft value chains. In Petén and Sololá, Counterpart provided technical assistance to tourism and handicraft SMEs, producing marketing and promotional materials such as business cards, menus, and updating website content, among other initiatives according to the customized technical assistance plan developed with each beneficiary. A special focus was placed during this quarter in identifying and prioritizing activities and needs in light of the imminent ending of the technical assistance provided through this program.

Counterpart joined efforts with the Tzolojya Community of Municipalities (Manktzolojyá) in the implementation of the scenic tourism route, designing the interpretative, educational and sequential signs that will orient guides and enrich the visitor experience. In the Western Highlands, based on the results of the Geotourism assessments, Counterpart supported the Local Tourism Committee of Sibinal, San Marcos and association members in the design and implementation of a series of operational and sustainability manuals in order to consolidate tourism operations.

### *Supporting Women's Producer Groups*

Counterpart continues to strengthen women's handicraft producer groups. In May, various workshops were held and technical assistance was provided, focusing on properly establishing product prices for each producer group. Additionally, training on product quality control was provided and two members from each group became designate as quality control experts who will be in charge of this aspect of their respective groups. Additionally, in San Pedro La Laguna, counterpart is working on the implementation of a program that will strengthen the implementation of handicraft production and develop the entrepreneurial opportunities for women in the region.

### *Maya 2012 Activities*

Counterpart continued to collaborate in the efforts to maximize the Maya 2012 phenomenon as a marketing and improvement opportunity for tourism in communities and protected areas of Guatemala. Training workshops were implemented in Sololá and Guatemala City. Based on the results of the assessment of archaeological sites related to the Maya 2012 commemoration, Counterpart is collaborating with IINGUAT and the Ministry of Culture and Sports in generating a series of tourism product development and marketing tools. The official [www.2012guatemala.com](http://www.2012guatemala.com) website is being improved and printed visitor guides were produced for Chocó and Zaculeu in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Sports.

### *Access to Credit*

Counterpart supported FUNDESPE in implementing an extended outreach and technical assistance effort to fund women artisans in Totonicapán and Quetzaltenango. Through this initiative 61 loans totaling \$36,451.61 were issued to women through 14 communal fund groups. Additionally, in partnership with ADIGUA, Counterpart worked to increase access to credit, which resulted in 37 new loans issued to indigenous micro entrepreneurs from Quiché and Sololá. Along with the Lake Atitlán Association for Integral Development (ADICLA), additional technical assistance has been provided to credit beneficiaries and 78 loans worth \$51,288.66 were allocated during this quarter. The program for Support of Young Entrepreneurs, in collaboration with ADICLA, issued 17 credits worth \$13,000 for the startup of 17 new tourism and handicrafts businesses.

### *New Handicraft Producer Groups*

Two new groups were incorporated into the business incubation process in collaboration with Comunidades de la Tierra. Through the initial interventions, they standardize their procedures and production methodologies and are able to properly estimate production costs. Order samples were delivered and evaluated for quality for additional groups, with satisfactory results ranging from 80% to 90%. During the third quarter of FY 2012, sales of pre-existing producer groups increased by an incredible 100%.

## **Market-Based Conservation Strategies through Tourism and Handicrafts Sectors**

### *Public Use Planning*

Counterpart is supporting the preparation of an updated Public Use Plan in the Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park. Two workshops were held to focus on norms and regulations and edit the previous version of the Plan that went unused due to lack of community participation in the development process, an issue Counterpart addressed during this quarter.

In Todos Santos Cuchumatán Regional Municipal Park, Counterpart supported a process that would lead to approval of a Master Plan, which has been five years in development but has yet to be adopted. Workshops with relevant stakeholders were carried out in order to publicize and solicit community feedback on the Plan and the newly appointed mayor of the municipality expressed great excitement and has dedicated many resources to ensure that the plan is enacted. As a result of this process, a basis for updating and approving the new Master Plan has been established.

The official promotional website of tourism in protected areas was launched on April 26 in collaboration with CONAP. The website features protected areas with adequate conditions for tourism and visitation activities and follows the production of a printed guide to the protected areas of Guatemala.

### *Tool Production*

Counterpart is currently collaborating with the Ministry of Culture and local organizations to develop a tool for the detection, prevention, and monitoring of tourism impacts in protected areas. The tool is being developed through a series of pilot interventions that will then be aggregated into a generic tool.

Counterpart is working to address issues with the Unified Registry of Visitors to protected areas (RUV). The correction and updated implementation of the RUV system was a priority for the program in the third quarter. Findings regarding the failures in the system were followed up with recommendations for improvements.

### *Policy and Relationship Building*

Counterpart participated in the presentation of a proposal for a State Policy for Sustainable Tourism Development in Guatemala to the President of Guatemala, Otto Pérez Molina. Counterpart participated in workshops and provided input to the document along with other relevant tourism industry stakeholders.

Counterpart facilitated the processes for structuring seven community associations and the general Yaxha Region Tourism Committee, which included a strategic visioning and planning workshop and the preparation of bylaws and regulations for each community association. Subsequently, eight community associations became formalized with bylaws and regulations.

### *Guide Training*

In collaboration with Grupos Gestores, Counterpart is supporting the establishment of a community based tour operator, which would promote and commercialize tourism products and services in the central highlands region. Counterpart also supported the process for preparing the operation and business startup plan for the tour operator and the necessary sustainability and procedures manuals, making them fully operational and ready to pursue certification processes.

Experience sharing exchanges for guides in Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park were held, providing 15 community tourism guides with trainings at Candelaria Caves National Park. Additionally, the Fourth National Congress on Tourism Guides was co-hosted by Counterpart, gathering over 150 tourism guides from around the country for intensive trainings on tourism related issues.

## II. Third Quarter FY2012 Results Summary Tables

PMP Indicators										
Indicator	Project Global Target	FY 2011 accumulated total	Fiscal Year 2012 Target	1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2012	2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. 2012	3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr. 2012	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr.2012	Total FY 2012	Cumulative Total	% Accomplished
Income generated (US\$)	\$20,000,000.00	18,108,195	3,000,000	1,481,639	1,019,168.05	1,148,256.24		3,649,063.11	21,757,258.19	109%
From tourism		13,013,786	2,000,000	803,863	829,833.67	860,568.66		2,494,265.28		
From handicrafts		5,094,408	1,000,000	677,776	189,334.38	287,687.58		1,154,797.83		
New Jobs created (Full time job equivalents)	8,700	5,261	2,580	92	398	392		882	6,143	71%
Visitors	675,430	720,053	130,000	52,882	62,820	82,997		198,699	918,752	136%
New SMEs created	220	132	88	6	2	42		50	182	83%
Strengthened organizations	1124 (cumulative LOP)	1145 (cumulative LOP)	220 (current)	205 (current)	170 (current)	192 (current)		345 (current)	1,241 (cumulative LOP)	110%
Credit allocated for tourism and handicrafts initiatives (US\$)	1,005,581	925,566	82,000	27,226	155,451.61	148,587.63		331,265.05	1,256,830.79	125%
Leverage (US\$)	8,572,000	7,857,655	1,002,000	161,295	1,588,240.40	-		1,749,535.17	9,473,552.04	111%
Cost share (US\$)	2,600,000	2,215,886	515,000	99,948	157,184	25,621		282,753	2,368,715	91%

ETEO - SO2 / ECON GROWTH INDICATORS OP Indicators <i>Program Element 6.2 Private Sector Productivity</i>								
Indicator	Project Global Target	FY 2011 accumulated total	Fiscal Year 2012 Target	1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2012	2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. 2012	3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr. 2012	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. 2012	Total FY 2012
<i>Program Element 6.2 Private Sector Productivity</i>								
Number of firms currently receiving USG assistance to improve mgmt. practices	1,124 <i>(cumulative LOP)</i>	1145 <i>(cumulative)</i>	220 <i>(Current)</i>	205 <i>(Current)</i>	170 <i>(Current)</i>	192 <i>(Current)</i>		345
Number of SMEs currently receiving USG assistance to access bank loans or private equity	196 <i>(cumulative LOP)</i>	179 <i>(cumulative)</i>	17 <i>(current)</i>	5 <i>(current)</i>	175 <i>(current)</i>	-		180
Number of public-private dialogue mechanisms utilized as a result of USG assistance.	4	4 maintained	4 maintained	4 maintained	4 maintained	4 maintained		4 maintained
<i>Program Element 8.1 Natural Resources and Biodiversity</i>								

<b>Number of people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable natural resource management and conservation as a result of USG assistance</b>	<b>10,869</b>	<b>10,108</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>651</b>		<b>1,659</b>
Number of women	5,142	4,811	450	108	431	328		867
Number of men	5,727	5,297	550	150	319	323		792
<b>Number of people receiving USG supported training in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation</b>	<b>7,210</b>	<b>6,591</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>214</b>		<b>699</b>

<b>Sales of goods and services as a result of USAID programs, In thousand \$</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>18,108</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>1,482</b>	<b>1,019</b>	<b>1,148</b>		<b>3,649</b>
<b>Number of jobs created as a result of USAID programs (Full time job equivalents)</b>	<b>8,700</b>	<b>5,261</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>392</b>		<b>882</b>
<b>Number of households benefiting directly from USG interventions.</b>	<b>13,372</b>	<b>13,744</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>1,249</b>	<b>975</b>		<b>2,558</b>



### III. Introduction

Guatemala's natural and cultural heritage and its human resources are all valuable assets to generate sustainable economic development in specific regions of the country through competitive tourism and handicrafts enterprises. Tourism and handicrafts initiatives help to generate and strengthen enterprises and activities in rural areas (including community organizations and micro, small and medium enterprises). Tourism has become a leading economic activity in Guatemala, especially in light of the international financial crisis and a significant reduction in remittances; however, Guatemalan tourism still faces huge challenges related to consolidating traditional and non-traditional tourism products and services and to generating new options for special interest markets that may be driven based on Guatemala's unique cultural, archaeological and biodiversity assets. Despite many initiatives, in several isolated cases, for the development and marketing of tourism products by communities and small and medium scale businesses, Guatemalan tourism products and services have not been able to penetrate all key markets and, in many cases, lack integration into relevant value chains.

The Alianza para el Turismo Comunitario (the Alliance), implemented by Counterpart International and its partners, through a cooperative agreement with USAID, has provided an excellent opportunity to work at the local level, promoting a greater number of micro, small and medium enterprises and enabling them to compete in international markets. The Alliance has and continues to generate, a wide array of possibilities for poverty reduction and local development and food security through income and job generation in rural areas, while helping to preserve the natural and cultural heritage.

By linking sustainable natural and cultural resource management with market opportunities, the necessary economic incentives are generated so that community members become interested in managing their heritage in a sustainable manner and, at the same time, are better able to adapt to the challenges posed by climate change. In order to support community organizations, SMEs and other tourism organizations, Counterpart will continue to implement its activities through the following strategies: 1) building the organizational capacity of rural communities and SME tourism operations; 2) creating and marketing Guatemala's distinct brand of natural and cultural community destinations; 3) improving access to marketing, product design and financial services for the SMEs in tourism destinations and handicraft development; 4) using strategic public-private alliances; and 5) improving local support for and participation in the conservation of biological diversity.

This report describes the main activities and results developed during the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2012 in the regions and thematic areas where the project has planned interventions. Counterpart developed the activities in close coordination with institutional partners from the Guatemalan government, private sector and other NGOs including: INGUAT, CONAP, Ministry of Culture and Sports, INTECAP, Ministry of Economy, National Geographic, ANACAFE, COOPSAMA, BAMRURAL, Asociación Balam, AGEXPORT's Arts and Crafts and Sustainable Tourism Commissions, Guatemala's Microfinance Network (REDIMIF), Grupos Gestores, Guatemala's Chamber of Tourism (CAMTUR), Association for the Integral Development of Guatemala (ADIGUA), Association for Integral Development of the Lake Atitlán Basin (ADICLA), Red FASCO, municipality associations (*mancomunidades*) and Maya 2012 Committee. Additionally, Counterpart continues to generate and strengthen relationships and joint work initiatives with local and regional partners such as tourism committees and commissions, local NGOs, cooperatives and producer groups.

#### IV. General description of activities and results

##### ***Component A: Tourism and Handicrafts Value Chain Strengthening***

**Objective 1:** Support and create a greater number of sustainable tourism and handicrafts SMEs and community-based organizations in rural destinations through the value chain approach.

**Objective 2:** Improve access to marketing, product design, and financial and credit services for SMEs and community organizations involved in sustainable tourism and/or handicrafts development.

##### **Activities:**

##### **1.1 Improve marketing and business practices for tourism SMEs and CBOs through the value chain approach: “Logremos que su empresa ó destino venda más” (Let’s boost your business) program**

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of Fiscal Year 2012, Counterpart continued to implement customized technical assistance and training activities for SMEs and Community Tourism Organizations in key regions of the country through the “Let’s boost your business” (*Logremos que su empresa o destino venda más*) program. Marketing and promotional strategies and activities were designed and implemented engaging both existing and new beneficiaries. Many of the activities implemented during this quarter are based on identified needs for businesses prior to anticipated closeout of the Community Tourism Alliance. Beneficiaries have been properly informed about imminent closeout of the program on September 30<sup>th</sup>. This information has led to updated technical assistance plans and activities and to requests from many beneficiaries to identify alternative sources of funding that could support continued technical assistance under the Counterpart model.

##### **Petén**

In Petén, Counterpart continues to provide technical assistance to a number of tourism and handicrafts SMEs in Central Petén, Southern Petén (San Luis, Dolores and Poptún) and El Remate. One new beneficiary, Jardín de la Selva Casa de Ernesto, El Remate, was incorporated into the program during this quarter, and the technical assistance process was initiated immediately.

Relevant products completed with previous beneficiaries of the technical assistance program include:

- i Business cards for: Exploradores de la Cultura Maya Tour Operator and Travel Agency, Ruiz’s Land Hotel, Hotel Posada Ixobel and Luis Carlos Hotel
- i English and Spanish menus for: Deli Chapín Restaurant, La Casa de Doña Toñita Hotel and Restaurant, and El Hacendado Hotel and Restaurant
- i A promotional brochure for Las Gardenas Hotel and Restaurant
- i A promotional banner for San Miguel Hotel
- i Road and promotional signs for El Hacendado Hotel and Restaurant
- i Updated web site content for all beneficiaries of the different Petén regions; updating process of the websites is currently underway



### Sololá

During this quarter, Counterpart provided technical assistance through this program to a total of 18 beneficiaries, including 14 SMEs, three associations and one federation in the municipalities of Sololá, Panajachel, Santa Catarina Palopó, San Pedro La Laguna, San Juan La Laguna, San Marcos La Laguna, San Andrés Semetabaj, Santa Lucía Utatlán, and Santiago Atitlán.

Specific actions were developed during this quarter following the learning by- doing process and the following results and products were completed in collaboration with the beneficiaries:

- i A new co-branding image was produced for Casa Alegre Tours and Roger's Tours, two local tour operators that offer complementary adventure tourism products and packages on different sides of the Lake Atitlán Basin. Working in collaboration, both tour operators will promote their routes through a series of co-branded events that will be promoted as MTB Atitlán.



- i Counterpart supported Tornado's Excursions in the design of their brand and applications for business cards, an advertisement for a local magazine and a promotional-tourism map of San Pedro La Laguna. Tornado's Excursions is one of the new businesses created as a result of this program. During the first months of FY 2012, Counterpart facilitated trainings to boat operators and tourism guides from San Pedro La Laguna; several members of a family who participated in the trainings decided to form their own businesses and, with additional technical assistance from Counterpart and the La Laguna Municipalities Association, completed the formalization process. Counterpart's support is now focused on implementing the necessary marketing and promotional actions for this new initiative.



- i A new restaurant menu was produced with Hotel Cacique Ralón, Sololá, featuring the new dishes and amenities of the improved restaurant.



- i As part of the technical assistance to Oxlajuj B'atz', an association supporting women handicraft producers in Solola, Quiche, and Totonicapán, a new logo and brand were produced for a new women's producer group located in Totonicapán, which became incorporated into the association. Additionally, 24 labels were redesigned to best promote sales by the other 11 groups in the fair trade store of Oxlajuj B'atz', ensuring timely and fair payment for each woman producer.



- i A consolidated brand was developed for the Tzolojya Expo Fair which is celebrated in July and August every year. The expo-fair is held in Sololá with artisans and tourism service providers from the municipalities of Sololá, San José Chacayá and Santa Lucía Utatlán. Counterpart provided technical assistance in producing the logo and brand guidelines based on collaborative efforts with the organizing board, formed by the Secretariat of Social Works of the Wife of the President (SOSEP), Municipality of Sololá, ADIGUA and Manctzolojya Municipality Association. The brand will be used on every edition of the expo-fair with a minor change in the year date, according to each edition.



- i Product labels were developed for the dried medicinal plant products commercialized by Fundación Tradiciones Mayas in their medicine plant garden, complementing their medicine plant garden tours and in their store.
- i As part of the collaboration efforts with the Lake Atitlan Association for Integral Development (ADICLA), Counterpart supported the preparation of a market study and business plan for the hotels that ADICLA will implement in Sololá and San Andrés Semetabaj. The interventions included preparing operational procedures and market forecasts in order to evaluate feasibility of the businesses and a plan for the use of public spaces in the San Andrés Semetabaj location.

#### Formalization and strengthening of seven women's handicrafts groups from Lake Atitlán

##### *Fundación Tradiciones Mayas*

Counterpart continued to collaborate with Fundación Tradiciones Mayas to formalize and strengthen seven women's handicrafts producer groups as independent enterprises. From May 2 to 22, the workshops and technical assistance process were focused on properly establishing product prices for each producer group. For this process, through a series of Q&A and dialogue sessions, relevant production information was collected from each group, and each group worked on standardizing materials and labor inputs for production of each item. Fixed and variable costs were then calculated with this information. Exercises were then used to illustrate efficiency and cost implications of variations and price setting differences for wholesale and retail markets. The methodology continued with workshops with group leaders, which in turn were replicated in each community with all of the group members. The second phase was carried out in June with training on product quality control. During this activity, two members from each group became designated as quality control experts who will be in charge of this aspect for their own groups. A quality control format was prepared in order to document and monitor quality production aspects with each member of the groups. In total, 64 women from 7 groups participated in this phase.

The new businesses formed through this process include 64 women and the formal names and locations of the groups are:

1. Ixqib kukan kib, Patanatic, Panajachel
2. Flor Clarence, Santa Clara la Laguna
3. Qatoqib de Chirijox, Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán
4. Flor Juanera, San Juan la Laguna
5. Chuwila, Quiejel, Chichicastenango
6. Voz de los Tzutujiles, San Juan la Laguna
7. Waqxaqi' kan, Chuacruz, Sololá



#### Asociación Oxlajuj B'atz'

Counterpart continued to collaborate with Oxlajuj B'atz' in the process for strengthening and formalizing 13 women's handicrafts producer groups from the western highlands. A workshop on new products development was carried out on April 25<sup>th</sup>. The workshop focused on presenting new design trends and standards and establishing a common work methodology that will be replicated within each producer group. Nine community facilitators who participated in the workshop will be in charge of replicating the workshop with the 13 producer groups and provide technical assistance for implementation of improvements in each group. The workshop also included a practical session on production of carpets with reused fabrics.

A cost calculation workshop took place on May 23 and 24, with 15 women from the groups supported by Oxlajuj B'atz'. The workshop provided a practical approach to calculating inputs and costs involved in producing handicrafts. Based on the results of the workshop, the groups' leaders are now able to better calculate real costs for their products and replicate the experience in each of their groups. During the next quarter, the workshops will be replicated in every group, and prices for each product will be evaluated in order to ensure competitive participation in fair trade markets.



*Workshops conducted in collaboration with Oxlajuj B'atz'*

#### Solola's Tourism Commission

Counterpart continued to participate as a member of Solola's Tourism Commission, providing technical support in the implementation of marketing and other program development activities. During this quarter, Counterpart continued to lead the process for data collection and editing for the official Lake Atitlán destination web portal ([www.visitatitlan.com.gt](http://www.visitatitlan.com.gt)), a follow up action implementing one of the recommendations developed during a consulting practicum facilitated by Counterpart for the Tourism Commission, in collaboration with Del Valle and George Washington Universities in 2009. Currently, a final information compilation format has been produced; final edited information and picture files have been collected for the 19 municipalities to be included in the portal, based on the summary below. Uploading into the portal is underway and expected to be completed during the next quarter. Once fully operational, this portal will become the main source for updated information about Lake Atitlan and its tourism

products and services and a main tool for marketing of the destination and individual SMEs and community based initiatives.

*Summary of the information collected and edited for inclusion in [www.visitatitlan.com.gt](http://www.visitatitlan.com.gt)*

- i 20 general destination fact sheets (19 municipalities + Lake Atitlan)
- i 826 individual destination and tourism product and service fact sheets for attractions, emergency services, complementary services, activities, events, hotels, restaurants, tour operators, Spanish schools, volunteering, relaxation options, and others according to INGUAT tourism inventory standards.
- i Digital picture file for the 19 municipalities according to the detailed tourism inventory

Rural enterprise fair *Paisaje, Cultura y Sabor: Atitlán 2012*

The fair *Paisaje, Cultura y Sabor: Atitlán 2012* took place on April 4 and 5 in Panajachel Sololá, providing micro and small enterprises, artisan associations, cooperatives, and community tourism organizations from the region with an organized space and event in which to promote and sell products and services to local and international visitors. The event was considered a runaway success, with participation of 51 rural enterprises from 10 municipalities of the Lake Atitlán Basin and from other regions, including Totonicapán, Quetzaltenango and Chimaltenango. The event was co-hosted by Counterpart, the Association for Integral Development of Guatemala (ADIGUA), MANKATITLAN, Municipality of Panajachel and Secretariat of The President's Wife Social Works (SOSEP). Products featured at the event included wooden gift and décor items, beaded accessories, natural fiber products, natural dye textiles, baskets, musical instruments, shoes made of typical textiles and agricultural products.



*Producers and products featured at the Paisaje, Cultura y Sabor: Atitlán 2012 fair*



### San Antonio Palopó Handicrafts Fair

The San Antonio Palopó Handicrafts Fair took place on June 12 and 13. During this event, 12 micro and small enterprises, cooperatives and associations from San Antonio Palopó featured their handicrafts products and tourism services for visitors who came to town drawn by the traditional San Antonio Celebrations. The most successful products included typical Palopó ceramics, textiles and furniture made from local vegetable fibers. The event was organized in collaboration with the Association for Integral Development of Guatemala (ADIGUA), MANKATITLAN, and Municipality of San Antonio Palopó.



*Stands and products at the San Antonio Palopó Handicrafts Fair*

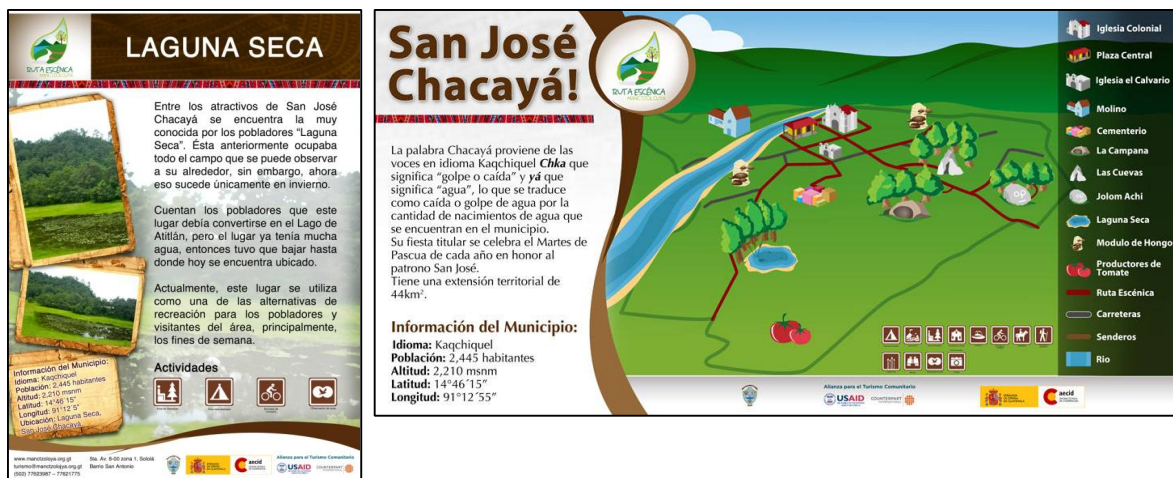
### Manktzojya Route

Counterpart became a key partner of the Tzolojya Community of Municipalities (Mancomunidad) in the implementation of the scenic tourism route, covering the municipalities of Sololá, San José Chacayá and Santa Lucía Utatlán. The route has been planned and designed as a series of stops on interesting points with cultural, natural and landscape highlights along the main roads of the region. Through its in-house team of interpretive and design experts, Counterpart supported the design process for the route's logos and branding elements and the Living Museum included in the route.



Additionally, Counterpart is working on designing the interpretive, educational and sequential signs that will orient, guide and enrich the visitor experience along the route. The design and implementation of this route is an important step in the implementation of an integrated process that will eventually lead to the implementation and promotion of new tourism products and destinations in municipalities located "off the beaten path" in the Lake Atitlán region.





### Support to women's group in Santa Catarina Palopó in collaboration with Red Nacional de Grupos Gestores

Counterpart is supporting the program for "Strengthening of artisan production of typical textiles with women from Santa Catarina Palopó". This effort is part of the collaborative actions developed with Red Nacional de Grupos Gestores and as one of the identified strategies for promoting entrepreneurship and improved productive skills for women of the Lake Atitlán Basin. During May and June, a series of 7 trainings, delivered in two sessions each, were implemented with the women involved in the process throughout. The trainings and workshops included a variety of topics, such as: associativity, entrepreneurship, maintenance of sewing machines, pattern cutting, and production of handbags, skirts and shorts.

### Strengthening of women's capacities for the implementation of handicrafts production projects in San Pedro La Laguna

Counterpart is collaborating with La Laguna Municipalities association (Manklalaguna) in the implementation of a program on "Women strengthening for the implementation of handicrafts productive projects in San Pedro La Laguna". This program provides a unique opportunity to develop new entrepreneurial opportunities for women in this region thanks to the implementation of a revolving fund managed by Manklalaguna. To maximize investments, Manklalaguna will be providing seed capital for raw materials and equipment for the groups, while Counterpart will be providing the technical assistance and training in the productive entrepreneurial process. The main activities carried out during this quarter included:

- i A series of workshops oriented around strengthening organizational and administrative capabilities were implemented. Specific topics covered in the workshops included: leadership and teamwork, basic administration, accounting procedures, management of books and bank accounts. In total, 55 women from the 6 producer groups participated in the workshops.
- i The Q'ijj K'ayib'la' entrepreneurship fair was implemented on June 27<sup>th</sup>. During this fair, 22 SMEs and associations from San Pedro, San Pablo and San Marcos La Laguna showcased their products and services. The fair was co-sponsored by Fundación ETEA and the Secretariat of Social Works of the Wife of the President (SOSEP). Textiles, bead accessories, and baskets were among the most successful products offered during the fair.



## **Verapaces**

### Cloud Forest Reserves

Counterpart is providing technical assistance to the Cloud Forest Biological Corridor Association (CFBCA) of Alta and Baja Verapaz. Based on an initial assessment of needs and opportunities, it was determined that the area where the most urgent technical assistance was needed was related to orienting and implementing marketing strategies. The necessary steps for the development of the marketing strategies and materials were identified and agreed upon by the members of the Association, which included 18 reserves and tourism destinations located within the Cloud Forest Biological Corridor. The first step in the process is the production of new professional and market oriented contents that will be used in promotional materials. Counterpart is supporting the Association in compiling and editing the necessary information and supporting documentation to generate new web based and printed promotional materials. During this quarter, information about the 18 tourism destinations was prepared through field visits and verification with stakeholders and an images file was produced. The next steps, including validation of the general information and production of the web and printed materials will begin early in the next quarter.

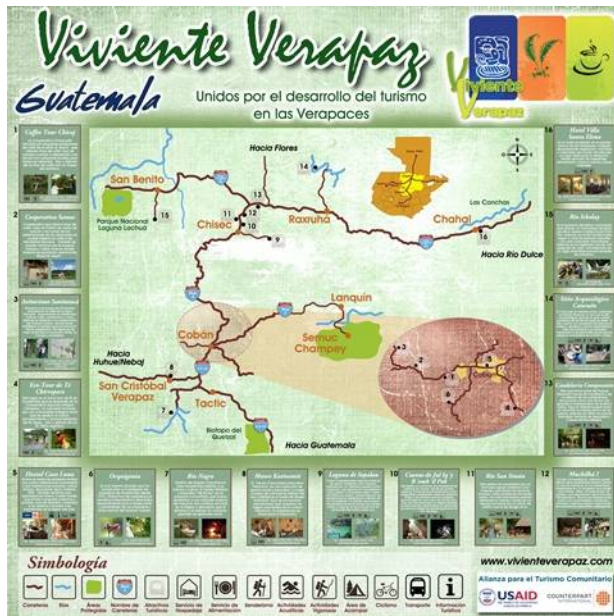
A workshop on Structuring of Tourism Packages was implemented with 16 representatives (10 men and 6 women) from private reserves and tourism businesses from the Cloud Forest Reserve Association on June 14.

### Viviente Verapaz

Counterpart continued to coordinate efforts with Viviente Verapaz, an alliance of community and private tourism destinations and a tour operator in order to assess products and generate a promotional package. The assessment process started during the past quarter and, based on the results, a new promotional package is being produced. In total, 16 community and private tourism enterprises and destinations were assessed and included in the written copy and picture files produced as an initial step in the preparation of promotional materials. Through repeated field visits, information about each destination was completed and verified. Based on the results of this assessment process, two different promotional materials are currently under production: an integrated map featuring the 16 destinations forming Viviente Verapaz with their locations and main characteristics and a printed guide providing detailed information about each particular community destination.



A workshop on Tourism Quality Service is being implemented in collaboration with INTECAP for 23 representatives (19 men and 4 women) from Viviente Verapaz community and private business members. The workshop will be developed through 4 sessions scheduled to conclude in July.



### Maya 2012 activities

#### 2012: Archaeology, Astronomy, Epigraphy and Prophecies of the Ancient Maya Workshops

Counterpart continued to support INGUAT, the Ministry of Culture and Sports, and the 2012 Committee, in promoting and maximizing the potential of Guatemala as the epicenter of the 2012 Maya commemoration date. During this quarter, Counterpart continued to lead the implementation of training workshops about the Maya 2012 commemoration. Two training workshops were held in Sololá. The first workshop was carried out during May 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> with 17 members of the Atitlán Tourism Guides Network (10 men and 7 women). The second workshop was held on May 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> with representatives of the Sotzil Cultural Center (14 men and 7 women). Both workshops were facilitated by Antonio Cuxil.



An additional workshop was facilitated by Dr. Tomás Barrientos at Del Valle University on Saturday, May 5, between 12:00 and 6:00 pm. 45 participants (11 men and 34 women) attended the workshop, including students and alumni from the archaeology, history, anthropology and tourism departments of Del Valle, Landivar and San Carlos

universities and also by several representatives of the Guatemalan tourism sector. Participants demonstrated great interest in the topic and the Questions & Answers and discussion session extended well beyond the 6:00 pm scheduled time. Participants commented that the workshop and the material (an illustrative manual prepared in collaboration by the facilitators and Counterpart) were very relevant both for their personal careers and interests and for the business and position opportunities that the Maya 2012 topic brings for Guatemala and its communities.

#### Assessment of sites and parks related to the 2012 commemoration

As part of the collaborative efforts with the 2012 Committee, Counterpart performed an in-depth analysis of 17 proposed sites and parks related to the 2012 commemoration. Based on a set of criteria, ten priority sites and parks were then selected to perform field evaluations. Field evaluations included both an assessment of the conditions of the sites or parks and their environs as well as a complete inventory of complementary services in the surrounding region. The study generated great interest as a planning and prioritizing tool by government offices and the private sector. The final edited version of the document was produced during this quarter. Based on the results of this assessment, Counterpart continued to work with INGUAT during this quarter to produce a comprehensive route proposal based on the sites related to 2012 that could be complemented with missing relevant tourism information and shared with tour operators and tourism sector leaders as a useful tool in designing alternative tourism products related to the 2012 commemoration with a scientific basis and with a focus on community and SME inclusion. The official launch of the 2012 Route or Bak'tunes Route (final name still under discussion) is scheduled for early next quarter.

#### Official Guatemala 2012 website

Government and private organizations involved in the development of the agendas around the Maya 2012 celebrations requested Counterpart's technical guidance and support in evaluating and redeveloping the official Guatemala 2012 website. During this quarter, Counterpart continued to work with INGUAT and local tourism leaders and representatives in producing updated information that could be fed into a newly designed and structured website. The website will include basic information about the Maya, the Mayan calendars, the 2012 phenomenon and the main sites related to the 2012 phenomenon. Additionally, the site will include complementary information about tourism products and services located around the 2012 sites so that both independent visitors and tourism businesses can plan and develop new routes and itineraries based on this relevant information. The site will be uploaded into the [www.2012guatemala.com](http://www.2012guatemala.com) domain, previously held by the 2012 Committee, and will be then re-routed into INGUAT's servers to include proper updating of information and consistency with authorized product and service providers. The official launch of the site is scheduled for next quarter along with the launch of the new route related to the 2012 phenomenon.

#### Visitor guides for Chicolá and Zaculeu

As a collaborative effort with the Ministry of Culture and Sports, Counterpart supported the production of visitor guides to Chicolá and Zaculeu archaeological and cultural sites. These important sites located in the highlands of Guatemala hosted preparatory events related to the Maya 2012 commemoration agenda being promoted by 2012 Committee and the government of Guatemala. The commemoration event at Chicolá was held in May, while the event at Zaculeu is scheduled for July. The events include a series of protocol activities, cultural presentations and events and local development proposals by stakeholders. The events generally attract media attention and coverage that leads to increased awareness of the sites as tourism destinations.



## 1.2 Increase access to credit and financial services for tourism and handicraft SMEs

### Collaboration with Guatemala's Network of Microfinance Institutions (REDIMIF)

Counterpart continued working in collaboration with REDIMIF and some of the REDIMIF member organizations, especially FUNDESPE (Foundation for Development of Small Enterprises). During this quarter Counterpart supported FUNDESPE in implementing an extended outreach, technical assistance and selection effort to fund women artisans from Totonicapán and Quetzaltenango. Most of these credits were issued through local communal funds, so technical assistance and accompaniment during the process was essential in reducing the risk and ensuring proper project implementation for women beneficiaries. In total, 61 individual loans were issued to women through 14 communal fund groups for a total of \$ 36,451.61 (Q. 205,000.00), with individual loans ranging from US\$129.00 to US\$645.16. Business activities to be supported through the credits included embroidery, production of artisan textiles, production and sale of typical clothes and textiles.

### Collaboration with the Association for the Integral Development of Guatemala (ADIGUA)

Counterpart continued to implement joint activities with ADIGUA through the "Economic Reactivation of the Tourism Sector in Western Guatemala" program. The program is aimed at strengthening the technical, administrative, and gender equity abilities of micro and small tourism entrepreneurs and handicrafts producers from Sololá, Quiché, and Totonicapán. It is expected that, through these actions, a greater number of micro and small entrepreneurs will be able to obtain access to credit and manage their loans appropriately and in a profitable manner. The novel approach of this program includes a series of training and marketing actions as a complement to credit facilitation activities. As part of commercial activities, marketing tools are being developed with each beneficiary who completes the program, and commercial fairs are being held in key regions during special dates. The first of such fairs was the rural enterprise fair *Paisaje, Cultura y Sabor: Atitlán 2012*, referenced under activity 1.1 of this report.

During this quarter, 957 women and 102 men participated in 44 trainings covering varied topics including the following:

- i Introductory business management
- i Citizen participation
- i Women's human rights
- i Customer service
- i Textiles: color combinations, finishes, new designs
- i Embroidery
- i Food preparation (including typical food)
- i Family gardens
- i Knitting

The combination of promotion and technical assistant activities supported by Counterpart through ADIGUA contributed to increased access to credit by providing expanded customer service, dedicated personnel and strategies for the tourism and handicrafts sectors. Interventions aimed at increased access to credit resulted in 37 loans issued to indigenous micro entrepreneurs from Quiché and Sololá, for a total amount of Q.446,923.36 (US\$57,667.53). Enterprises that benefited from these credits are related both to tourism and handicrafts activities.

#### Collaboration with the Lake Atitlán Association for Integral Development (ADICLA)

Counterpart is implementing collaborative actions with ADICLA to expand access to credit for handicraft and tourism initiatives in the rural communities of Sololá. The process with ADICLA is carried out through a dual strategy, including a series of promotional training events with current and potential credit beneficiaries, and training and updating of the ADICLA staff so that they become more efficient in promoting credits and supporting clients in their business planning and implementation efforts. Through the joint effort with Counterpart, ADICLA has been able to expand its range of activities and beneficiaries and provide more thorough technical assistance to credit beneficiaries. In total, 78 credits worth Q 398,000.00 (\$51,288.66) were allocated during this quarter through the work with ADICLA for enterprises related to handicrafts. Additionally, through a novel approach, the Program for Support of Young Entrepreneurs provided 17 credits worth Q102, 000.00 (\$ 13,110) for the creation of new businesses related to tourism and handicrafts. These businesses include some traditional activities such as production of textiles and internet cafes, but also some innovative ideas based on identified niches in the tourism value chain, such as production of bottled purified water to source local hotels and production of candles to source hotels, restaurants and event venues.

On the promotional training events side, two workshops were implemented with community representatives and potential credit beneficiaries. The first workshop was held in two sessions, carried out on May 23 and 30. During this workshop, 60 participants (40 women and 20 men) received training on "Basic concepts related to gender equity". The workshop covered theory and practice related to gender equity, and participants were able to analyze the implications of different types of relationships between men and women in rural contexts. The second workshop, focused on "Citizen Participation," was held on June 26, with 40 participants (22 women and 18 men). This workshop provided participants with theory and techniques for effective participation in critical decision making spaces in society. The idea behind these workshops is that community leaders become better empowered and to transform their dreams into effective entrepreneurial ideas that can be financed through one of the credit options offered by ADICLA. Through collaboration with Counterpart, the workshops reached a larger constituency and new critical topics such as gender equity were introduced.

The first module of the training program on Entrepreneurial Management for staff of ADICLA was held on June 18 and 19. The program is aimed at providing ADICLA staff with better tools with which they may assist current and potential credit beneficiaries on crucial aspects that needed strengthening based on previous experiences by ADICLA and Counterpart in supporting rural credit for tourism and handicrafts businesses. This first module focused on aspects of strategic planning such as vision, motivation, managing change, and basic components of entrepreneurial management, teamwork, leadership, and effective communication. In total 14 women and 26 men participated in this training and will begin applying the new techniques and their methodologies in their work in the field immediately.

#### Credits for productive projects with families from communities in Chisec and Raxruhá, Alta Verapaz

During fiscal year 2011, Counterpart and local partner AGRETUCHI (Community Tourism Association of Chisec and Raxruhá) had implemented a rural credits program in order to incorporate families from local communities into the tourism value chain through sourcing poultry and eggs to local restaurants. In response to additional demands for the establishment of family poultry farms in communities surrounding Candelaria Caves National Park, Counterpart and AGRETUCHI continued to expand the program with 13 additional loans of Q12,000.00 each (\$ 1,548.00), for 26 families, financed in this case, by BANRURAL.



During this quarter Counterpart focused on providing technical assistance to credit beneficiaries to assure proper credit management and effective management of the poultry production businesses. The 6 beneficiaries of the initial round of credit issued in 2011 were able to pay their loan properly back to the funding institution COOPSAMA. Two families from the first round became monitors and technical advisors for beneficiaries of the second round of credit and the monitors worked providing technical assistance on poultry production aspects. Counterpart provided support on financial and business management aspects. Early in the business establishment process of the second round of beneficiaries, an exchange-of-experiences trip was implemented for them to see an established family farm from the first round and learn firsthand from the experiences of that process.



#### Formalization of microcredit facilities in Verapaces and Petén

Counterpart continued to support the communities of Sepalau, Alta Verapaz and El Zapote, Petén in the formalization of their community microcredit facilities. Both community microcredit facilities were started as a result of previous Counterpart interventions in the region to support tourism and productive activities. Both communities decided to set apart a portion of their initial tourism and productive earnings to establish a community microcredit facility. Currently El Zapote manages a microcredit facility of approximately Q 35,000.00 (\$ 4,500) which directly benefits over 40 local families, while Sepalau's microcredit facility manages approximately Q 55,000.00 (\$7,100) in credit for over 50 local families. During this quarter, Counterpart facilitated an integral assessment of the microcredit facilities in both communities and ensuing trainings for managers and beneficiaries of the microcredit facilities. In El Zapote 37 women participated in the trainings, while in Sepalau 9 men and 8 women participated in the trainings.

### **1.3 Develop and consolidate new tourism products and services in the Western Highlands**

#### Consolidation of tourism products and services in San Marcos

Based on the results of the Geotourism assessments, Counterpart supported the Local Tourism Committee of Sibinal, San Marcos and its community association members in the design and implementation of a series of operational and sustainability manuals to consolidate tourism operations. The general operations and bookings manual was prepared in a participatory manner with local tour operators and community providers of lodging, food, transportation and guiding services. The manual outlines specific procedures and tools for managing reservations, registration of visitors, and internal regulations. The manual also includes practical approaches from the sustainability manual and establishes guidelines for structuring of packages, managing relationships with other value chain actors, management of equipment and sustainable tourism good practices implementation. It is expected that this manual will facilitate quality and sustainability of tourism operations and services through standardized processes and practices.

The production of a community tourism guides operations manual was also supported by Counterpart, according to the priorities established in consultation with tourism actors in Sibinal. The community tourism guides manual documents internal organizational and operational procedures for the group of community tourism guides and for proper management of the group's assets. Apart from establishing processes and procedures, the manual is focused on helping community tourism guides achieve quality in the provision of their specialized tourism services.

The communities of Sibinal serve Tajumulco volcano, the highest volcano in Central America, and a series of community-run farms offering interactive activities for visitors.



Technical assistance for Chikabal Volcano and Lake and the Association of Ecological Farmers of Chikabal (ASAECO)

Counterpart is providing technical assistance to local Maya Mam ASAECO association, currently in charge of managing tourism in the Western Highlands as part of a coordinated effort with CONAP. Counterpart is working in collaboration with ASAECO to implement a work plan based on the technical assistance priorities to strengthen the organization and improve the management of the tourism destination. During this quarter, the content and design for the promotional web page of the destination were updated. The workshop on updating the web page content was performed utilizing Counterpart's creative briefing process and format, and it was agreed with ASAECO that it should be mainly youth representatives involved in the process, as they will also be responsible for managing the website and its content in the future. The process is also being supported by a local Peace Corps Volunteer.

Technical assistance for Chajil Siguan natural park, Chuamazan, Totonicapán

Counterpart continued to collaborate with Helvetas Probosques and Chuamazan community in the implementation of a tourism program for Chajil Siguan Natural Park and community reserve. Based on an integrated work plan, Counterpart has facilitated technical assistance and training to develop and improve ecotourism products, strengthen capabilities to manage the tourism destination and to provide specific services including tour guides, food and beverages, interpretive design, effective management and marketing of tourism destinations.

During this quarter Counterpart facilitated a series of training events for community members who are or will be engaged in providing tourism services as the community-run tourism destination becomes fully operational. An integrated strengthening course for eight community tourism guides was facilitated in collaboration with INTECAP from April 17 to May 22. The course included topics such as quality services for tourists, general aspects of Guatemala, specific aspects of the community as a destination and group management. A series of integrated courses were held in May and June with the community members who will be involved in providing food products and services at the community destination; nine women and five men are involved in this training process. The courses covered practical aspects of food and beverage operations and services, such as hygienic manipulation of food, basic cooking techniques, basic and advanced table service and beverages preparation.





### Loma Linda tourism destination

During this quarter Counterpart started providing formal technical assistance to strengthen tourism products and operations in the Loma Linda tourism destination of El Palmar, Quetzaltenango. Following Counterpart's methodology, the initial steps included a field assessment visit and a workshop with the community representatives to structure and validate a work plan. The introductory workshop was carried out on April 16 and a memo outlining expectations and responsibilities was signed. Loma Linda tourism destination is managed by the local Loma Linda Integral and Tourism Development Association (ASODILL). ASODILL has been developing and marketing tourism products and services over the past two years with some interesting results as an emerging destination. Based on the assessments and priorities identified by ASODILL, Counterpart is supporting an integrated strengthening effort, including training and technical assistance for human resources development, marketing and improved management of the tourism destination.

The training program implemented in collaboration with INTECAP and ASODILL has included different courses according to identified needs and characteristics of the destination. A course on practical first aid aspects was implemented with 11 community representatives (three women and eight men) who are involved in tourism operations in the community; as a result of this course, a first aid kit for the community was implemented. A course on quality tourism service was implemented from June 25 to 27 with eight women and seven men. Practical aspects included in this training included: success and failure factors in tourism service, assessing service quality, and improving service quality.

### Establishment of a tourism information and commercialization office for Totonicapán tourism products and services

As part of the collaborative efforts with Grupos Gestores, and following recommendations from the Geotourism assessments performed under this program, Counterpart is supporting the establishment of a tourism information and commercialization office (PAT- *Punto de atención turística*) for tourism products and services of the Totonicapán region. The assessment showed that, despite having adequate potential and a resource for tourism development, the region does not appear on main tourism routes and information outlets due to the lack of consolidation and updated product and service information. Additionally, no one is packaging and commercializing the tourism offer of Totonicapán except for some isolated products and services that are integrated into other routes.

Based on the abovementioned conditions, Counterpart worked with Grupos Gestores to scout the region looking for an adequate solution to setting up a structure for collecting information about relevant tourism products and services, packaging tourism products and promoting and commercializing them. The municipality of San Andrés Xecul offered direct support to the initiative and the information and commercialization office is being set up in that town, which holds one of the major tourism attractions of the area, the colorful San Andres Xecul church. The office now holds a data base of 300 tourism service providers and commercial agreements are being sought with providers to structure a services portfolio for the office. The office is already promoting and commercializing bird watching tours, a cultural tour, and nature tours. As part of the preparation process for the implementation of the tourism information and

commercialization office, 15 local tourism guides from Totonicapán received formal training to become tourism guides from INTECAP and are in the process of becoming officially certified.



#### Technical assistance for Chaculá community tourism destination

Counterpart continued to provide technical assistance for Chaculá community in Nentón, Huehuetenango. Chaculá community operates lodging and tours in an ancient estate that they acquired after spending several years exiled in Mexico due to the civil war. Different programs in the past supported remodeling of the ancient farm house and initial establishment of the tours. However, Chaculá required additional assistance from Counterpart to provide training and technical assistance for tourism guides and managers of the lodging facilities. During this quarter, Counterpart implemented, in collaboration with INTECAP, a technical assistance process for diversification of menus, and the production of new dishes and desserts.



#### Vuelve a la Vida – Agua Caliente Development Civil Association

Counterpart continued to support Agua Caliente Development Civil Association and “Grupo 40,” the community organizations managing Vuelve a la Vida hot springs in San Carlos Sija, Quetzaltenango. After having completed and approved the internal bylaws for the Civil Association in the past quarter, work during this quarter focused on drafting and approving the internal regulations for management of the hot springs tourism destination under management of the “Grupo 40,” which is represented within the Civil Association. During a workshop, held on April 18, the internal regulations for proper and orderly management of the thermal waters facility were discussed and transformed into a guidelines document. In total, 35 (31 men and 4 women) out of the 40 members of the “Grupo 40” participated in the workshop, which was conducted under a participatory methodology and concluded in approved elements of the internal regulations by which the group and the administration of the tourism destination will run.

#### 1.4 Incubate new handicraft producer groups in the Western Highlands and incorporate them into value chains



##### Identification and incubation of two new producer groups from the Western Highlands

This component is implemented under the sub award with Comunidades de la Tierra. After having evaluated twelve producer groups during the past quarter, the final two groups with the highest potential for incubation of new businesses were selected. After completion of the initial two phases of the incubation process, activities during this quarter focused on continuing the phases of the inclusive business development model. Final data for the groups selected to receive direct support for incubation of new businesses during 2012 is listed below:

1. Name of group: Amistad  
Location: Cantón Xolsacmalja, Totonicapán.  
Number of members: 18 (1 man, 17 women, 18 indigenous)
2. Name of group: Nuevo Amanecer  
Location: Cantón los Tuices, San Andrés Xecul, Totonicapán  
Number of members: 25 (25 women, 25 indigenous)

Activities carried out with the new groups cover the completion of phases 2, 3 and 4 of the inclusive business model. During phase 2, the groups receive in depth training and technical assistance on costs and productivity, by which they are able to standardize procedures and production methodologies and properly estimate production costs. In phase 3, the groups visit the office of Kiej de los Bosques for a detailed examination of the premises and the complete process encompassing all the necessary steps, from the placement of orders to delivery of products. This activity also offers members of the group the opportunity to voice any concerns or additional questions about the process and the business model. During this phase, the groups also visited another group that is already a member of the Comunidades value chain. Through this activity, the members of the new groups were able to get firsthand information and experiences from other rural people who are more advanced in the inclusive business model.

Phase 4 of the model included the production assessment. For this phase, each group received a test order, based on the technical assessment that indicated which product was more suitable to the abilities and production structure of each group. The production process for each group was closely monitored and supported by intensive training and technical assistance on specific aspects of each product. The first order of samples was delivered and evaluated for quality, with satisfactory results for both groups ranging from 80% to 90% in accomplishment of quality standards. First formal sales for these groups are expected to begin early in Quarter 3 of 2012.

##### Follow-up with groups incubated during FY 2011

During this quarter, work with the 3 producer groups incubated during 2011 included training and technical assistance for increased productivity and improved quality control systems. A significant improvement was the

implementation of a new system for raw material distribution, which showed immediate positive impacts on timeliness and quality of product delivery. Additionally, the groups received training to produce new lines of products, diversifying their business opportunities and production potential.

#### Preparation for increased sales forecasts during FY 2012

During the third quarter of FY 2012, sales for the producer groups increased by 100%. Therefore, an increased production plan was developed for each in preparation for the high sales season which will include at least four international fairs during the fourth quarter (United States, Spain, and New World Crafts). Preparatory actions for each group included: incorporation and training of new members into the producer groups to increase available qualified labor and improved sourcing and quality control systems for increased productivity.

#### Development of new collections

As part of the diversification process to increase sales at international fairs and through exclusive international distributors, a series of new product collections is being developed under support from the sub award agreement. Two new collections are completely developed and in the production phase: Amuletti and The Planets, and additional new collections will be completed during the fourth quarter.

### **1.5 Strengthen artisan groups already operating in the Western Highlands through the development of value-added handicrafts collections and insertion into value chains**

This component is implemented through a sub award with AGEXPORT's Arts and Crafts Commission. Actions implemented during the third quarter of 2012 included the following main activities:

#### New beneficiary groups

The five new beneficiary groups presented in last quarter report were confirmed to receive technical assistance and strengthening to improve productivity and generate new product collections. The table summarizing the groups is included below for reference.

No.	Name of the group	Location	Type of products	Contact	Beneficiaries	
					Women	Men
1	El Puente	Comitancillo, San Marcos	Textile and crochet products	Arlindo Velásquez 4336-3202	250	0
2	Asociación de Desarrollo Integral Comunitario ADICO	Esquipulas Palo Gordo, San Marcos	Decorative products with embroidered decorations, varied handicrafts	Enrique López 5226-2843	50	0
3	Asociación de Mujeres Artesanas El Porvenir de Chinantón	Aldea Chinantón, San Andrés Sajcabajá, Quiché.	Natural fiber (cibaque) products	Antonia de León 5322-9138	120	30
4	Asociación de Mujeres Tejedoras Chiquirichapenses AMTEDICH	Concepción Chiquirichapa, Quetzaltenango	Textile personal accessories (backstrap and pedal loom)	Lidia de León 5155 - 4633	80	
5	Cooperativa Integral de Comercialización Tejidos Cotzal	Cantón Xhavaltiohx, San Juan Cotzal, Quiché	Textile and natural fiber decorations and accessories	Pedro Marroquín 4621-9725	40	2
					540	32



### Development of new collections

In total, nine handicrafts collections were developed during 2012 for groups receiving assistance during this program (the five new beneficiary groups and four groups that had also received assistance during FY 2011). Technical assistance for these groups was provided through a team led by international designer Marjolein Keijsper, who coordinated the design innovation and development of new collections process in collaboration with two local designers who worked directly with the producer groups. The nine new collections include 230 new individual products that the producer groups will place into the marketplace and value chain links during 2012.

Prototypes for the collections have already been developed and fine tuning of the products and samples is underway, as the collections will be promoted and commercialized at the major gift and handicrafts show during the next quarter, including the New York International Gift Fair and New World Crafts.



*From left to right product collections by: El Puente, Comitancillo, San Marcos; Chinantón, San Andrés Sajcabajá, Quiché; AMTEDICH, Concepción Chiquirichapa, Quetzaltenango*

### Commercial agreement with Casa de los Gigantes

Based on the results with the groups supported under this program in 2011 and after having established initial contacts during New World Crafts, Guatemalan export firm Casa de los Gigantes decided to work with four of the first beneficiary groups to develop new collections for specific market niches of special interest. The new collections are ready and will be commercialized by Casa de los Gigantes at the main gift, accessories and handicrafts trade shows of the circuit, including New York International Gift Fair and New World Crafts. This initiative provides additional income opportunities for 104 women and 11 men of the 4 producer groups located in Santa Cruz del Quiché, Totonicapán, Momostenango and Aguacatán.



RESULTADOS ARETESANAS  
FLOR DE SAN JUAN



RESULTADOS CAJETERÍA AJ POP

*New product collections developed in collaboration with Casa de los Gigantes by Flor de San Juan, Aguacatán, Huehuetenango; and Cajetería Aj Pop, Totoncapán*

#### Promotional materials

Promotional materials for each of the new collections are being developed according to the branding of each producer organization and the market outlook for each one of the collections. Promotional materials are key elements for presenting a professional image of the products and producer organizations at the main trade shows. The promotional materials package under development for each collection includes:

- i 300 product catalogues
- i 300 product tags for samples
- i 200 business cards
- i 1 promotional banner
- i 1 CD with final images of all the products and materials

#### Guatemala commercial events

“Guatemala Nuestra” Festival will be held in CEMACO department stores from August 20 to September 17. Orders for products were placed during a showroom and beneficiary producer groups and are in full production to deliver initial orders. Estimated handicraft sales for the event total Q 1,000,000.00 (\$ 129,032.00).

“De sus manos a tu hogar” festival will be held in Walmart stores in Guatemala from August 15 to September 15. Producer groups supported through this program will participate in the event, following up on orders placed during the previous showroom. Estimated sales will total a minimum of Q 800,000.00 (\$ 103,225.00).

#### New World Crafts 2012

The New World Crafts Central American Handicrafts Trade Show, 2012 edition, will be held on September 12 and 13 at Casa Santo Domingo in Antigua, Guatemala. By June, 100% of the exhibit space had been reserved and confirmed by 100 producers and exporters, including the producer groups supported under this program. It is expected that at least 100 international buyers from high end retail and wholesale outlets in USA, Canada, Europe and Latin America will visit the trade show. Innovations will be introduced in the setup of the exhibits and in the format of the events to increase efficiency in negotiation processes and comfort for external visitors to the fair.

#### New York International Gift Fair August 2012

AGEXPORT's Arts & Crafts Commission will participate jointly with Casa de los Gigantes at the New York International Gift Fair to promote the products from the rural producer organizations supported under this program. The booth will be located at the Artisan Resource Area, Pier 92, Booth No. 33010.

#### Trainings and workshops

A series of trainings and workshops were implemented during this quarter according to identified needs and priorities within the Arts & Crafts Commission and with representatives of the main handicrafts producer and exporter groups. A detailed list of the trainings is presented below:

TOPIC	DATE	PARTICIPANTS			Venue
		Men	Women	TOTAL	
Export procedures for handicrafts	May 14	11	14	25	Guatemala City AGEXPORT
New fiscal and tax evasion prevention regulations	May 15	20	27	47	Guatemala City AGEXPORT
Artisan consortia	June 15	10	32	42	Qutezaltenango AGEXPORT

## ***Component B: Market-based Conservation Strategies through Tourism and Handicrafts Sectors***

**Objective 3:** Improve the capacity of local communities and other key stakeholders to co-manage and preserve natural and cultural resources through tourism.

**Objective 4:** Improve local community and other key stakeholders support for and participation in the conservation of biological diversity in the regions around key tourism sites.

### **2.1 Improve local and institutional capabilities of public use planning and tourism management in protected areas**

#### Preparation of the Public Use Plan for Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park

As part of the priority actions for tourism development in this park, which is increasingly becoming a popular tourism destination in the Maya Biosphere, Counterpart is supporting the preparation and approval process of the updated Public Use Plan. The first step in the preparation of the plan was the integration of the planning advisory team, formed by park managers, CONAP Petén technical direction, Counterpart International and the consultant in charge of the implementation of the plan. The team will be in charge of supervising the development of the plan, providing necessary feedback, coordinating necessary institutional support and linking with the necessary professional personnel and resources required for completion of the plan. The planning team was established at the end of April, and the process to assess the current situation of the park, public use specific issues, local dynamics, review of the implementation of the previous Public Use Plan, mapping of actors, SWOT analysis, and systematization of other relevant information was carried out from May to July. As part of this process, the following workshops and focus groups were conducted with main actors from the park:

- i A focus group was carried out with the main regional tour operators on May 24<sup>th</sup> to obtain updated information and opinions about the current situation and principal needs for tourism development in the park from the standpoint of regional tour operators.
- i The first general workshop to develop public use vision, principles and objectives of the Park was held on June 5, with 44 representatives of the Guatemalan government, municipalities, local development committees, private sector and NGOs. During this workshop, the general results of the public use assessment for the park were presented for feedback from a wide array of actors and to use as a basis in the preparation of the public use objectives and principles.



- i A focus group on establishment of zones for public use management was held on June 14 with representatives from the Yaxha Community Tourism Guides Association, CONAP Peten Technical Section, Ministry of Culture and Sports, tour operators and an archaeological research team for the site. The

objective of this workshop was to review existing zoning of the park and establishment of sectors in relationship with current tourism operations.

- i The second general workshop focusing on norms and regulations was held on June 20 with 42 representatives of government, communities, municipalities, private sector and NGOs. The workshop analyzed the norms and regulations included in the previous version of the public use plan and analyzed their relevance, considering new norms and regulations included in the new Master Plan for the park, norms for visitor activities in protected areas and general norms for archaeological sites, as well as the current context for the park.

#### Visitor impact detection, prevention, monitoring and management tool for protected areas

Counterpart is currently collaborating with CONAP and the Ministry of Culture to develop a tool for the detection, prevention, monitoring and management of tourism impacts in protected areas. The tool is being developed through a series of pilot interventions that will then be synthesized into a generic tool. The tool was introduced during preparatory visits to Chikabal Volcano and Lake and Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo protected areas, which were chosen as pilot sites. Park managers and community stakeholders participated in the introductory workshop where basic training about tourism management and impact management was provided along with a quick overview of the tool. The initial visits were complemented with interviews and focus groups based on the recommendations of main stakeholders. The preliminary version of the tool was then adapted based on the findings of the visits and a second round of visits was staged to field test the tools. Park managers and stakeholders participated in the field tests at both sites. New modifications were introduced based on the results of the field tests and the final version of the tool for Chikabal was presented to members of the local community tourism association. The final version of the Yaxhá tool and the generic tool are being further reviewed and will be presented in a participatory workshop with CONAP officials early next quarter.

#### Preliminary steps in the development of the master plan for K'ojlab' tze' te' nom Regional Municipal Park, Todos Santos Cuchumatán

Despite being one of the most ecologically and culturally diverse regions in Guatemala, Huehuetenango is one of the least represented Departments in the Guatemalan Protected Areas System. Only four protected areas for Huehuetenango appear in an official listing of 311 total protected areas for the Country; more importantly, these protected areas cover only 7,655 hectares, which represent less than 2% of the protected area surface in the country. Out of the protected areas in Huehuetenango, Todos Santos Cuchumatán Regional Municipal Park covers 7,253 hectares or nearly 95% of the protected area of the Department.

Despite its ecological relevance and uniqueness, the Todos Santos Protected Area faced several challenges in approving a Master Plan according to the standards of the Guatemalan Protected Areas Council (CONAP). The preparation of the plan took nearly five years (2005-2009), in an effort led by Guatemalan NGO FUNDAECO and supported by local organizations PROCUCH and ASOCUCH and by Conservation International. This initial plan, however, was never approved due to various reasons: the local municipal authorities refused to deal with some issues regarding the limits of the area and several communities that manage natural resources within the area did not support the plan.

Based on general frameworks with CONAP, FUNDAECO, the Wildlife Conservation Society and Conservation International, Counterpart International offered support to a process that would lead to approval of the long-standing plan. After in-depth consultations with relevant partners and stakeholders, it was determined that a series of activities were needed to ensure completion of the Master Plan process. A plan, which included consultations with relevant communities and authorities and an exchange-of-experiences activity for municipal authorities, was agreed upon. New municipal authorities took office in Todos Santos in the beginning of 2012. Although environmental topics have not usually been top priority for municipal authorities, the change was seen as an opportunity and the agreed process for the validation of the Master Plan was presented to the mayor and his office. Mr. Alfredo Gomes Pablo, newly elected mayor of Todos Santos and his municipal office immediately saw the potential for this topic to become a leading breakthrough in their administration. The municipal authorities decided not only to endorse the proposed



process but requested to expand the activities to ensure socialization and approval by a wide representation of stakeholders.

A series of workshops with relevant stakeholders was carried out in order to publicize relevant information about protected areas and the status and planning process for this particular protected area. During the first workshop, the municipal authorities received a summary of the history of the protected area and analyzed the roles that the municipality and other stakeholders should play in managing the park. During this meeting, the mayor recognized the importance of the protected area in the environmental and social integration of the municipality and demonstrated interest in appointing a full time park director who would be in charge of ensuring implementation of the Master Plan. During the second workshop, the planning process was discussed with the complete Municipal Development Council (COMUDE) in compliance with Guatemala's decentralization laws and following up on the recommendations of the mayor. The COMUDE approved the updating process for the Master Plan and requested that 5 regional municipal workshops be carried out in order to publicize the process with all of the stakeholders in the municipality.

The regional municipal workshops were carried out with auxiliary mayors, Community Development Committee (COCODE) representatives, and other relevant local stakeholders. In each meeting, general information about the protected area was presented and then a consultation process was held to discuss the process for updating of the Master Plan. After each workshop, community representatives signed a document authorizing the process for updating and approval of the master plan. The workshops were carried out in communities with a central location to allow for mobilization from neighboring communities. The following table summarizes the number of community representatives who participated in each workshop:

Community	Number of attendees
Todos Santos	70
Aldea El Rancho	55
Aldea Chichim	108
Aldea Mash	95
Aldea San Martín Cuchumatán	110

As a result of the process, the basis for updating and approval of a new and improved Master Plan has been established. Counterpart is negotiating with USAID for the approval of funds for the next steps in the process, which will lead to improved technical content of the plan and presentation of the finished version to municipal authorities and local stakeholders.

In a complementary manner, Counterpart supported an experience exchange visit in the field for the municipal authorities and park managers of Todos Santos. The field visit was held at Chuiraxamoló Regional Municipal Park in the municipality of Santa Clara La Laguna, Sololá. During the visit, the park's representatives were able to learn about the benefits, accomplishments and challenges that the park managers and municipal authorities have faced at Chuiraxamoló. One of the major takeaways from this visit was that the Todos Santos authorities realized that, to generate tourism flow into the protected area, it is necessary to work intensively on developing attractions, services, and providing finished tourism products and services.

This process has represented an outstanding milestone in the management of this important protected area and has established the groundwork for the improvement and approval of the Master Plan that will guide management and conservation of its valuable natural and cultural heritage.

#### Validation of co-management tools for protected areas

Counterpart is collaborating with CONAP to validate the new guidance tools and policy for co-management of protected areas. The second workshop on protected areas co-management was held in Santa Elena Petén on April 12, with participation of 20 representatives from CONAP regional offices, protected area co-managers, conservation organizations and municipal representatives. During the event, CONAP's Legal and Conservation Units departments

representatives answered questions and led discussions regarding the most relevant points and changes included in this new version of the protected areas co-management policy.

#### Systematization of the Unified Registry of Visitors to protected areas

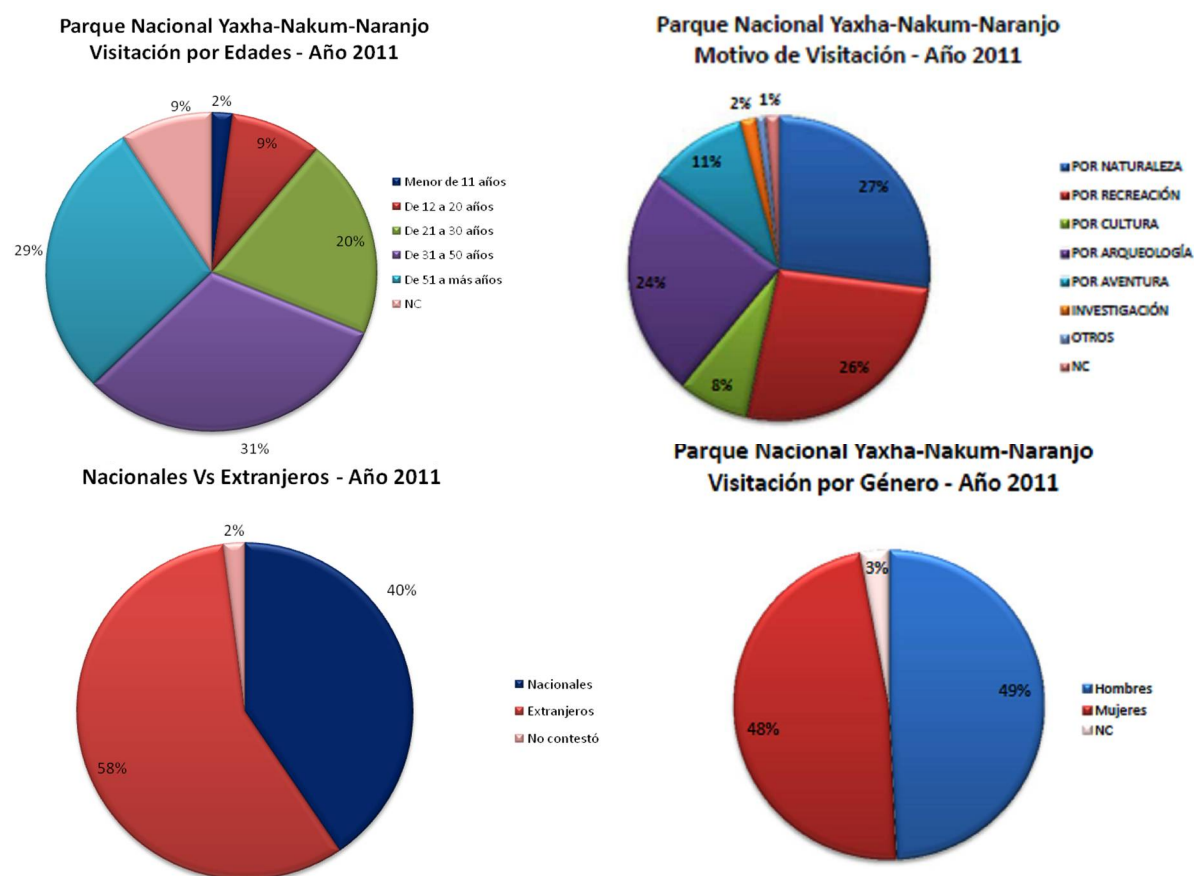
Counterpart International continued to support the Technical Council for Tourism in Protected Areas (COTURAP) in the implementation of the Unified Registry of Visitors (RUV). Official implementation of the RUV began in 2009, and in 2010, a computer program was developed for entry, storage and processing of data from the RUV. Limited resources for monitoring implementation have generated delays and loss of information in some protected areas. Given the fact that data and information generated by the RUV would be invaluable in planning for better management of the protected areas and in developing market-based tourism and service activities, Counterpart is supporting an implementation and correction process of the RUV in key protected areas.

The main protected areas where RUV related actions were implemented during this quarter are:

Protected Area	# trained	Main findings	Follow up recommended
Monumento Cultural Quiriguá	3	Not all visitors fill out the forms as they travel in large groups with limited time; mostly associated with cruise ships Tourism guides are also a major hurdle, as they are not cooperating with asking their tourists to fill out the forms	CONAP will work with tour operators and service providers to develop alternative methodologies and codes of ethics.
Corazón del Bosque Private community reserve	3		Training and technical assistance for proper installation and usage of the program was performed
Volcán de Pacaya National Park	2	The municipal authorities who left office in 2012 destroyed the RUV forms to avoid disparities between the number of visitors who filled the forms and the income they reported.	The new director and administrator of the park received the training on proper usage and processing of the forms and committed to following the RUV procedures
Monterrico Multiple Use Area	1	The software for processing the forms was not installed properly and did not allow the generation of reports.	Software installation was corrected and test runs of report generations were performed satisfactorily by local designee
Mario Dary Protected Biotope	2	The lack of internet service at the park has generated challenges in submitting reports.	Park managers received training and answered their questions on how to generate portable files of the reports.
Laguna Lachua National Park	4	Lachua is implementing the RUV satisfactorily and technical questions from the designated staff were solved during the training.	
i Mirador-Río Azul National Park i Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park	6	All of the Petén areas had not been able to install the software properly and the ones that were using the	Missing data was recovered where possible and technical personnel were able to solve questions and doubts through training.

i	El Rosario National Park		software had not been able to generate reports and had lost significant information.	
i	Cerro Cahui Protected Biotope			
i	San Miguel la Palotada El Zotz Protected Biotope			

The following graphs show the type of information that can be generated for tourism management in protected areas through proper implementation of the RUV. Information about visitors can be segregated by sex, age, visit motivation, and can account for national and foreign visitors. Different combinations of this data can be performed. For Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park 9,544 forms were processed to generate the 2011 visitors report and 5,804 forms for the first four months of 2012 have already been processed.



#### Technical study and new protected area category proposal for Chikabal Volcano and Lake

The process for the preparation of the technical study and re-categorization process for Chikabal Volcano and Lake Protected Area was initiated as part of the collaborative actions between Counterpart and CONAP. The process began by assembling an advisory team for the technical study preparation and validation process: the advisory team includes representatives of the consulting team, CONAP, ASAECE and Counterpart International. When the proposal for the technical study preparation process was presented to the municipal authorities of San Martín Sacatepéquez, the authorities requested that the process be approved by the Municipal Development Council

(COMUDE); thus, an ensuing workshop was held with the COMUDE in order to publicize and approve the intervention. The process then included a series of field visits to begin the updating of the flora and fauna indicative lists and to establish current and ideal situations of the protected area. Based on the field visits, a series of community feedback and validation workshops were planned with relevant local communities.

In total, nine informative and feedback workshops were implemented in May and June with municipal authorities, the Municipal Development Council, and specific villages around Chikabal Volcano. The workshops included a section in which participants were briefed about the status of the protected area and the process to produce the technical study. Afterwards participants had the opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions about the process. Workshops also served to validate willingness of local stakeholders to support the process and its results.

#### Official protected areas tourism website

On Thursday April 26 Counterpart participated with Guatemala's Protected Areas Council (CONAP) and National Tourism Institute (INGUAT) in a press conference and launch event of the new website promoting tourism in protected areas of Guatemala. This website was developed with financial support from INGUAT, with technical support from CONAP and Counterpart International. It was based on the success of the initial printed edition of the Guide "Journey through the protected Areas of Guatemala," produced in 2010 with technical and financial support from USAID through Counterpart International.

The event was held at Hotel Princess in Guatemala City. Attendance included over 45 representatives of tourism sector organizations and enterprises, conservation and protected area management organizations, academia and mass media. During the event, Mariela Lopez, CONAP's Executive Secretary, highlighted the importance of protected areas in preserving Guatemala's biological diversity and complying with international conservation agreements and recognized the importance of sustainable tourism in generating income for adequate management of protected areas. INGUAT's deputy director, Maru Acevedo, spoke about the importance of protected areas in developing and promoting Guatemala as an international tourism destination. Rony Mejía, Counterpart's director for Guatemala presented a review of the process for preparing the printed version of the guide, which eventually led to the production of the website.

The website is available in English and Spanish and includes an initial number of 51 protected areas which are readily available to receive visitors based on an evaluation of attractions and services. The site has the potential to be updated constantly and become linked to popular social networks. [www.tourism-sigap.com](http://www.tourism-sigap.com) / [www.turismo-sigap.com](http://www.turismo-sigap.com).

#### Presentation of the State Policy for Sustainable Tourism Development in Guatemala

The proposal for a State Policy for Sustainable Tourism Development in Guatemala was presented by the nation's President Otto Pérez Molina in a special event held on May 24 in the National Palace of Guatemala. The policy document was prepared under leadership from Guatemala's Chamber of Tourism (CAMTUR) and Tourism Institute (INGUAT), and Counterpart participated in the discussion workshops and providing inputs to the document along with other relevant tourism stakeholders, such as ASIES, FUNGUAT, AGEXPORT, AMCHAM, ANACAFE, APANAC, CONAP, COTURCON, IDAEH, FARES, FUNDESA, GHF, and PACUNAM.

## **2.2 Support SMEs in the implementation of good management and environmental practices leading to a sustainable tourism certification seal**

Counterpart further developed this component through alternative activities that led to improving management and sustainability practices and promoting some form of public and sector recognition for those SMEs involved. The alternative activities included: working with Guatemala's Center for Cleaner Production to implement the cleaner production methodology in selected businesses in specific destinations of the country and using the Geotourism strategy as a complementary good practices implementation and recognition intervention for tourism businesses and

destinations. Most of the planned activities for this component, except for the one described below, were completed and reported during the second quarter of FY 2012.

#### Establishment of community based tour operator

As part of the collaborative efforts with Grupos Gestores, Counterpart is supporting the establishment of a community based tour operator. The initial products and services that the tour operator will promote and commercialize were developed through an intensive participatory process. The process began with an inventory of available community based tourism and services in the central highlands region where the tour operator will develop its first specialized tours. Preliminary routes and packages were designed based on inventory and terms for structuring of the packages were negotiated with the community members who will be providing the services. After a process of training and technical assistance with service providers, a series of test tours evaluated the quality of the products and services and provide feedback on a systematized way that would identify further assistance and strengthening needs.

Counterpart also supported the process for preparing the operations and business startup plan for the tour operator and the necessary sustainability and procedures manuals. The tour operator became registered under the name Guate Experience and Grupos Gestores is completing the business and operational system that will integrate the tour operator with the rest of their initiatives. The manuals and policies developed for Guate Experience are compliant with international tourism certification standards. Thus, once the tour operator is fully operational, it will pursue the certification process. The manuals and policies prepared for Guate Experience are:

- i Sustainability Policy
- i Guate Experience Profile
- i Code of Ethics
- i Compendium of Tourism and Environmental Laws (Electronic Compendium)
- i Administrative and Operational Manuals
  - o Human Resources Handbook
  - o Procedures
  - o Reservations Policies
  - o Financial Policy
  - o Quality Manual
  - o Reparations & Maintenance
  - o Safety and Security Procedures
  - o Strategic Plan
- i All manuals and policies are under revision and will be approved by the end of July.

## **2.3 Facilitate training and certification or re-certification of a larger number of Community Tourism Guides**

#### Loma Linda Community Tourism Destination

The basic community tourism guides course and certification program was implemented in Loma Linda, El Palmar, Quetzaltenango, from May 21 to June 8. The course was completed by eight men and eight women, as part of the integrated training and technical assistance program that Counterpart is carrying out as a collaborative effort with local Loma Linda Integral and Tourism Development Association (ASODILL) and INTECAP. Accreditation processes for these community tourism guides will also be supported by Counterpart.

#### Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo region community tourism guides

An exchange of experiences tour for community tourism guides of the Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park region was facilitated by Counterpart prior to the National Tourism Guides Congress. 15 community tourism guides (three women and twelve men) from the communities surrounding Yaxha National Park made learning and exchange of experiences visits to Candelaria Caves National Park, Guatemala City's National Archaeology and Anthropology Museum and Antigua prior to participating in the National Tourism Guides Congress. The itinerary provided these community tourism guides with opportunities to experience how other community destinations are managed in

Candelaria Caves, to see many of the original sculptures that they have learned about through specialized archaeology trainings at the Museum, and to experience how tours and tourism in general are managed at a main tourism destination such as Antigua, Guatemala.

#### National Tourism Guides Congress

The Fourth National Congress of Tourism Guides was co-hosted by Counterpart and Guatemala's Tourism Institute (INGUAT) from May 27 to 30 in Tecpán, Chimaltenango. The event gathered over 150 tourism guides (including around 35 women) from around the country for an intensive series of training sessions and tourism activities around Tecpán. Topics covered during the training sessions included updates on archaeology, indigenous dress, history, tourism marketing, and tourism security, tourism management in protected areas, legal regulations, and 13<sup>th</sup> B'aktun. The guides also had the opportunity to discuss specific regulation issues with relevant representatives from INGUAT, headed by Director Pedro Duchez. Duchez offered to review the regulations regarding training requirements for re-certification of guides and evaluate options to efficiently offer training and updating courses in different regions of the country. The event was also supported by the local tourism committee (CAT), which has been developing a series of improved marketing and destination management activities with technical assistance from Counterpart. Counterpart provided special support for certified community tourism guides from Petén who participated in the activity, and combined it with a series of exchanges-of-experiences visits to community tourism destinations in Chisec, Alta Verapaz. Participants in the event received a certificate for 30 hours of training that can be counted towards becoming re-certified as official tourism guides.



#### Cruce a Dos Aguadas Community Tourism Guides Training

The training course for the community tourism guides of Cruce a Dos Aguadas Community, which serves the El Zotz - Tikal circuit, was completed during this quarter. In total, 19 community tourism guides (all men) took the final evaluation which included a theory section completed on May 22 and a practical section held on June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### Introductory and complementary trainings for Verapaces tourism guides

In the Verapaces several trainings for tourism guides were implemented in collaboration with INTECAP. On one hand, a course on first aid for tourism guides was implemented with five tourism guides (all men) from Hun Nal Ye Natural Park from July 12 to 14; this training is accountable as training hours for the revalidation of official tourism guide certification. On the other hand, the introductory Community Tourism Host course was implemented in two communities of the Verapaces as a first step in the selection of candidates who could then enter the selection process for the formal Community Tourism Guide accreditation program. The Community Tourism Host program in Río Negro - Chixoy, Salamá, Baja Verapaz concluded on April 27 with 13 participants (7 men and 6 women), while the course in Nimlacobejá, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, Alta Verapaz is being currently implemented with 18 participants (17 men and 1 woman) and will conclude in July.

## **Implement environmental and sustainable tourism good management practices in rural communities**

### Interpretive planning - Chajil Siguan Natural Park, Chuamazán Totonicapán

Through the collaborative work with Chuamazán Community in Totonicapán and Helvetas Quetzaltenango, it was determined that one of the main areas requiring technical assistance to maximize the potential of the community reserve as a tourism destination was the development of an interpretive plan. During previous years, the community had outlined and structured the trails used for community control of the reserve so that they could also be used in tourism visits. When Counterpart started providing technical assistance to this community, it was determined that better interpretation and product development was essential to offer a high quality tourism product. Utilizing Counterpart's Sustainable Tourism Good Practices Manual and in-house expertise, Counterpart is developing a participatory process by which the community is collecting relevant information about the reserve and this information is being transformed into an interpretive plan for visits to the park. Interpretive information includes: the relationship between the community and the reserve, history of the reserve, traditional uses of flora in the reserve, traditions and ancestral knowledge, etc. Interpretive stops have been defined and Counterpart is working with the local association and Helvetas in developing the graphic and media solutions for implementation of the interpretive plan.

### Interpretive planning Loma Linda Community Tourism Destination, El Palmar, Quetzaltenango

During the technical assistance and training process for Loma Linda Community Tourism Destination, it was determined that, although the destination has been in operation for at least two years, there was a need to develop interpretive plans for the trails in use. Counterpart has been working hand in hand with Loma Linda leaders to develop a process of revision and interpretation design of the main trails in use for tourism visits to Loma Linda Community destination. Important aspects of the process included evaluating positive and negative aspects of current trails and experiences during guided tours, evaluating new ideas that were presented by the community tourism guides to improve the trails and the tours through the trails, collecting relevant data and information about the trails and their relevant natural and cultural aspects, and discussing the initial versions of the interpretive plan with tourism guides and community representatives. Even before the process is completed, community tourism guides have already incorporated some of the relevant aspects of the new interpretive plan into their guided tours of the trails and the community.

### Strengthening of Maya Hostels in San Juan La Laguna

This intervention is developed in collaboration with Atitlán Association and Rupalaj K'istalin Community Tourism Guides Association. The process aims to formalize and strengthen a group of 18 local families (specifically the women in these families) who provide homestays for tourists in San Juan La Laguna. A customized training and technical assistance program, consisting of 13 modules, is being implemented for this purpose.

Four training modules (numbers 3 – 6 out of 13) were implemented during this quarter according to the details provided below:

- i Module 3, Customer Service, was implemented through a workshop held on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Basic topics included: factors influencing satisfactory service, types of clients, and management of special situations.
- i Module 4, Housekeeping and Room Decoration, was held on May 6<sup>th</sup>. This workshop was implemented through a participatory methodology in which the women shared their past experiences and ideas and combined them with the theory presented by the instructor and practical exercises performed in one of the houses of the families providing homestays to Spanish students. Basic topics covered included: proper bed keeping and arrangement, essential preparations for rooms, decoration details with local articles, checklist of proper room management and preparation.
- i Module 5, Hygiene of the Maya Hostel and Personal Presentation, was held on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Main topics covered included: security measures for rooms and bathrooms, maintenance and decoration of shared spaces, materials and equipment for cleanup of homes.
- i Module 6, Planning of Visits, was held on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and the main topics covered included: visitor expectations, relationships with host families, meal planning and preparations.



#### Environmental protection training program for municipal officers of the Franja Transversal del Norte Municipality Association

Counterpart is collaborating with the Franja Transversal del Norte Municipality Association (mancomunidad) in the implementation of a training program on environmental protection and solid waste management. The municipalities of this association hold a considerable number of communities, municipal and protected area tourism destinations and have demonstrated commitment to taking better care of their environment and actively managing solid waste in a proper manner to prevent degradation of the tourism sites. In total, eight of the ten training modules implemented in collaboration with INTECAP have been completed and the last two modules and presentation of final projects will be held during the next quarter. Also, some of the municipalities have initiated the preparation of an environmental management policy under leadership of the participants in this training. The municipalities included in the Franja Transversal del Norte Association are Chisec, Raxruha, Fray Bartolome de las Casas and Chahal.

## **2.4 Strengthen the working relationship between the government of Guatemala and the Maya Biosphere Reserve communities for tourism development**

#### Strengthening of community associations in the region of Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park

Counterpart continued to collaborate with the Park's Administration to develop and strengthen capabilities for community associations that provide tourism related products and services in Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park. These associations will become community run businesses, generating job and income opportunities for the communities surrounding the park and reducing threats to the biodiversity of the park and the Maya Biosphere in general. During the previous quarter, park stakeholders approved the Plan for Strengthening of Local Capabilities (developed with support from Counterpart International). Activities implemented during the third quarter were based on the strategies and actions identified in the aforementioned integrated plan. Among the most outstanding activities and results, the following can be mentioned:

#### *Formalization and restructuring of community associations*

One of the main elements of the plan was the formalization of most community associations and restructuring of some that had been previously operating in an empirical and many-times inefficient way. During May and June, Counterpart facilitated the processes for the structuring of seven community associations and the general Yaxha Region Tourism Committee. The process included a series of strategic visioning and planning workshops and the preparation and internal discussion of specific bylaws and regulations for each community association. The community associations that became formalized with approved by laws and regulations are:

1. Asociación de Mujeres Tropicales de Yaxha (Fruits, beverages and snacks), 12 women members
2. Asociación Gastronómica Seis Cielo (Food and related services), 25 members (19 women, 6 men)
3. Asociación de Transportes Acuáticos Topoxté (Aquatic transportation within the Park), 16 members (2 women, 14 men)
4. Asociación de Artesanos Unidos de Yaxha (Handicrafts), 18 members (2 women, 16 men)
5. Asociación de Emprendedores Comunitarios Yaxha, 14 members (8 women, 6 men)
6. Asociación de Transportistas Terrestres de la Región de Yaxhá (Ground transportation), 11 members all men
7. Asociación de Guías Comunitarios de Turismo (Community Tourism Guides), 26 members (4 women, 22 men)
8. General Yaxha Region Tourism Committee, formed by two representatives from each community tourism association, the Park Management Structure, and representatives from the local Development Committees (COCODES)

Internal bylaws and guidelines were prepared and approved through intensive participatory processes. Three work sessions with each association were required to develop the contents of the regulations; a fourth workshop provided presentation and validation processes, and the fifth workshop included revision of the final documents in full with the majority of members of each association and the incorporation of any necessary feedback. Approved bylaws and



guidelines provide guidance for board and group governance and guidelines for operations and conflict resolution options.

Eight bylaws and internal regulations documents are completed and approved by each board (seven associations and the General Tourism Committee). The final delivery of the documents to beneficiary groups will be held in the beginning of the fourth quarter.



#### *Business plans for community tourism associations*

Following up on the strengthening plan for the community tourism associations and tourism service providers, Counterpart supported the process for the production of business plans for five community associations with products and services ready to enter the mainstream market. Business plans are essential in orienting the strategies and actions required by the community associations to develop and implement sustainable and profitable businesses. The business plans are being developed in a participatory manner through a series of meetings and workshops with community association members and representatives. The initial workshop for general presentation of the process was held on May 15. The first specific workshops with each organization were implemented from May 16 to 26, covering introductory topics that included:

- i Basic elements of a business plan
- i Objectives of a business plan
- i Contents of a business plan

The introductory workshops also included planning and establishment of roles and responsibilities for the business planning process and of future meetings. Baseline information was collected for the first financial runs of services, products, prices, costs and calculation of required inputs for operations. The results of the preliminary financial runs were discussed with community associations in workshops held from June 18 to 22. Business plans are set to be finished in August.

#### Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo Semana Santa Preparations

During the end of FY 2011 and beginning of 2012, the program “Vive Yaxha en Semana Santa” was developed as a pilot initiative to integrate efforts among the members of the Local Tourism Committee for the Region of Yaxha, and make the best out of the Semana Santa high season. Through this process, promotional activities were combined with a value chain assessment and planning process that allowed for orderly and strategic provision of community services for visitors. New regulations for the provision of tourism associated services in the park were produced and roles and responsibilities of both the Park and community organizations were defined and agreed upon.

The value chain approach facilitated the quick generation of new products that were put on the market during Semana Santa (April 2 to 8). The main products tested during this pilot were:

1. Guaranteed scheduled transportation between Yaxha ↔ Flores ↔ Yaxha
2. Yaxha one day tour (operated through community services)
3. Yaxha 2 day/1 night tour (operated through community services)

Promotional materials featuring community services in the park that were produced under this initiative included banners and flyers, which were distributed in key marketing points of Petén (including most hotels, restaurants and tour operators in Central Petén) and along the main access roads. Community associations designated representatives to participate in a press conference and several radio shows in order to promote their new tourism products and services. Signs with new regulations for visits to the park were also produced.

Close monitoring and technical assistance from Counterpart during the Semana Santa activities facilitated systematization of results and lessons learned, among which some of the most outstanding were:

1. Community groups were able to calculate costs of their products and services, set prices based on profit margins and develop new mechanisms for conducting business.
2. Members of the community groups were able to analyze every aspect of their business operations; some of their own main conclusions included the need for further training and the need for additional practical opportunities to develop and deliver better quality products and services.
3. Park management designated special areas to set up vending spaces for community products and services; orderly operations and security were supervised by park's personnel during the entire week.
4. Over 70 community members from seven community associations participated in the process, organizing, producing and commercializing tours, souvenirs, transportation, aquatic transportation, guiding services, food and beverages.
5. It was estimated that 70 families benefited directly and indirectly from the improved earnings generated through this organized process. 254 day jobs were generated during the Semana Santa break for community service providers.
6. Participants were able to understand in a practical manner how they play an important role within the tourism value chain of this park.
7. The associations generated total sales worth at least Q 52,907.00 (\$6,800) during the week.
8. Although total sales were still modest, this was the first time that community members really perceived benefits from their Semana Santa activities, since they kept records properly, had a system for distributing earnings, and were able to fully understand their role in the park's tourism value chain.
9. Organizational and service aspects in the community associations are still incipient and the need for further technical assistance, training, communication, and teamwork was perceived.
10. Promotional and outreach activities led by community members with support from Counterpart and Park Management allowed community members to better understand how the tourism business is run at the main points of distribution and agencies that will become some of the main wholesale clients of the community associations.

#### Design of a destination image and brand for Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park

Based on the plan for improvement of this park as a tourism destination, developed in collaboration with park management and local communities, Counterpart is supporting the process for the design and implementation of a destination image and branding of this protected area. A proposed destination image for the park had been developed in the past under a previous project, but local stakeholders felt that the process did not include enough local involvement and did not reflect the main attributes of the park. The current process involves intensive participation from park management and community representatives to provide feedback and approval of the proposals. The park's management and community organizations have committed to applying the resulting image

and brand in all unified promotional and commercialization efforts for the park, its tourism products and services and in other relevant applications such as internal signage and decorations.

#### Promotional video for Carmelita and Uaxactun Tourism Commissions

Counterpart is working in collaboration with CONAP and the Carmelita and Uaxactun tourism commissions to produce a promotional video of the tours and experiences related to visits to El Mirador and neighboring archaeological and natural sites in the Maya Biosphere. Video and documentary material has already been collected and the editing and validation process of its contents is underway. Official launch of the promotional video is expected for next quarter.

#### Strengthening of other Maya Biosphere Reserve community tourism groups

Counterpart is collaborating with FUNDESA to generate a professional, scientifically based, interpretive strategy for tours guided by the Cruce Dos Aguadas community through its main tourism circuits, including El Zotz Protected Biotope and Tikal National Park. Work on this product started during this quarter, with the production of the scientific natural and archaeological compilations that will collect and condense all of the relevant updated information about the natural and archaeological characteristics and traits of the region. The compilations will then be transformed into a tourism-appropriate interpretive script that will be mediated for training and support materials for the community tourism guides and will also be incorporated into promotional materials.

#### Promotional activities for Carmelita and Uaxactun Communities Tourism Commissions

These activities were implemented under the sub award agreement with Asociación Balam.

#### *Business meetings with national tour operators*

On June 15<sup>th</sup>, the Carmelita Tourism Commission held a business meeting with Adrenalina Tour Operator, a specialized tour operator based in Quetzaltenango, to plan and reach agreements for joint promotion and commercialization of the Carmelita - Mirador circuit tours. One of the main activities considered in this meeting was planning activities with specialized groups that Adrenalina is programming for December 21<sup>st</sup> as part of the Maya Cycle change commemoration activities. Also, a business roundtable was carried out with tour operators from the Quetzaltenango region.

Additionally, the Carmelita Tourism Commission also held a meeting with representatives of the Panajachel Tour Operator Association, which groups at least 35 tour operators and travel agencies. As a result of this meeting, a business roundtable was programmed for July 23<sup>rd</sup> with the members of this association to promote and commercialize the Carmelita products directly through tour operators in the Lake Atitlán region. Members of the Uaxactun Tourism Commission will also participate in this business roundtable to promote and commercialize their tourism products and services.

Asociación Balam worked with the Carmelita and Uaxactun Tourism Commissions to produce a series of promotional materials that are being used in the promotional and commercialization activities. Posters and brochures outlining the highlights, products, tours and services of each tourism commission were produced, and websites are currently under construction.

#### *Structuring of tourism packages with Uaxactun Tourism Commission*

Asociación Balam worked with the Uaxactun Tourism Commission to structure integrated tourism packages that can be better promoted and commercialized through contacts with tour operators and through a new set of promotional materials. As well, the agreements with the Ministry of Culture for promotion and commercialization of Uaxactun's products and services in a designated space within Tikal National Park are being reviewed in collaboration with the Viceminister of Cultural Heritage.

## **1. Gender mainstreaming activities and results**

Counterpart's approach to gender in this program has been an integrated approach, with the reduction of gender-related inequalities being a cross-cutting objective. Based on this approach, the full staff of the program received a specialized training on Gender and Gender issues in the beginning of FY 2011 and a support manual was produced. The identification and implementation of gender related activities depends on the challenges and opportunities identified by Counterpart staff in the field. Based on the identification of such challenges and opportunities, the field staff can rely on the support manual and on senior management in order to discuss innovative and complementary approaches. Negotiations of collaborative actions with current and potential partners always include a detailed analysis and proposal of gender-related issues and activities.

In the Western Highlands, handicraft production interventions continued to be focused on women and women's groups. The new beneficiary groups (8) included in interventions through sub partners AGEXPORT and Comunidades de la Tierra are mainly formed by women who will have access to new sources of income through participation in sustainable and profitable value chains. Interventions with these groups are not only focused on improving handicrafts production and increasing productivity but also on empowering women and strengthening their entrepreneurial abilities.

A strong focus on women is also reflected in other activities such as the increased access to credit component. In the Western Highlands 61 credits issued in collaboration with FUNDESPE were all for women, with ADICLA 78% of the credits went to women, while with ADIGUA the ratio of credits issued was approximately 50% for men and 50% for women. Work with ADIGUA also includes a series of women's specific workshops combine basic information about women's rights and gender with self-esteem and motivation activities in order to empower women who may have been sidelined in the past. During this quarter, 957 women and 102 men participated in 44 trainings covering business management, women's rights, sex and gender, food preparation, home gardens, and handicrafts. In the Verapaces women became beneficiaries of credit for the management of poultry production farms to source local restaurants and women from El Zapote are formalizing a community microcredit facility that was established with initial incomes from tourism activities in the community.

In Sololá, several activities are also focused on empowering women and transforming incipient women's groups into independent productive initiatives. In Santa Catarina Palopó, a group of women is receiving basic textile production and business management in collaboration with Grupos Gestores as a basis to generating an integrated business concept for the women's group. In San Pedro and San Juan La Laguna women are receiving training to transform part of their homes into Maya hostels that provide lodging and food services for Spanish students and tourists in general. Women are becoming empowered to the point where each of their homes will run as a micro enterprise.

### **Training on Organizational Development Methodology**

Four members of the Counterpart Guatemala Team participated in a workshop based on Counterpart's signature Organizational Development Methodology. The workshop included preparing a specific work plan for the Guatemala program as part of the exit strategy in light of the imminent end of the program in 2012 and conducting a practice organizational development assessment with a Honduran NGO working in Copán Ruinas. Participants will replicate the training with the complete Counterpart Guatemala staff to identify additional actions and strategies.

## **2. Environmental Compliance**

All of the activities implemented during the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2012 continue to fall under the Categorical Exclusion issued to those activities involving technical assistance, training, analyses, studies, workshops, document transfers, and others that will not have an impact on the environment.